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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 02 ABUJA 002687

SIPDIS

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TAGS: [PREL](#) [PGOV](#) [SU](#) [CG](#) [XA](#) [NI](#)

SUBJECT: NIGERIA: NSA MOHAMMED EAGER ABOUT SUDAN, PERPLEXED
BY DROC

REF: ABUJA 2562

Classified by Ambassador Howard F. Jeter. Reasons 1.5 (b) and (d)

1. (C) Summary: During an October 16 meeting with Ambassador Jeter, NSA Aliyu Mohammed stated that Nigeria, actively engaged on Sudan, would host a "3-in-1" conference ultimately bringing together the Southern factions, Northern opposition and Bashir Government negotiators around one conference table. Mentioning the USG would be invited to observe the November 12-17 meetings, Mohammed suggested Special Envoy Danforth visit Nigeria before going to Sudan. While animated about Sudan, the NSA merely shook his head about DROC, describing it as a thicket of internal and regional intrigue from which Nigeria might disengage unless the parties demonstrated more seriousness in their negotiations. End summary.

2. (C) Visibly pleased with his country's efforts, Mohammed declared that Nigeria had progressed far on the Sudan. Dr. S.G. Bugaje, the President's Special Envoy on Sudan, had just returned from talks in Cairo and London with various opposition groups, Mohammed informed us, calling this the last leg in Nigeria's plan to consult the various Sudan players. Now, he asserted, Nigeria had the green light to convene the "3-in-1" conference. The format would be an initial meeting of Southern factions, then a second meeting of the National Democratic Alliance would ensue. Afterwards, the opposition (North and South) would meet Government negotiators in the third conference. (Comment. Apparently, the Nigerians have refined their thinking about the composition of the second meeting. In reftel, Mohammed said the second stage would be for the Northern opposition. This time he stated it would be for the entire opposition. End comment.)

3. (C) The NSA continued that President Obasanjo had drafted a letter to President Bush asking for an official USG observer presence at the talks. Mohammed added that IGAD states, Egypt and Libya would receive similar letters. Former President Carter, having expressed interest in Sudan to his old friend Obasanjo, might also attend the conference.

4. (C) Ambassador Jeter, joined by PolCouns, asked Mohammed if he could visit London October 24 for more detailed consultations with the DAS Snyder/Bob Oakley team traveling to East Africa for preliminary discussions that will pave the way for Senator Danforth's November trip to Sudan. Grappling momentarily with his schedule, Mohammed offered that Dr. Bugaje would fly to London if he, Mohammed, could not break free. The NSA then suggested that, once ready to visit Africa, Special Envoy Danforth should consult in Abuja with President Obasanjo prior to setting down in Khartoum. After raising two possible time frames for a Danforth visit to Abuja, November 11-12 (before Sudan) or November 17-18 (after Sudan) Jeter and Mohammed decided a third alternative was worth exploring - a November - 2 or 3 meeting in Washington during President Obasanjo's working visit. (During a brief October 18 meeting, President Obasanjo invited Dansforth to come November 17-18 after being informed by Ambassador Jeter that Danforth would not be in Washington November 2.)

A HARD DROC

5. (C) As discussion moved to DROC, Mohammed's face dimmed. Opposition leaders Bemba and Onusumba, meeting President Obasanjo last Friday, forecasted the Addis talks would yield nothing significant. With 300 participants, the Addis forum was too unwieldy for the intricate, detailed discussions needed for a break-through, the opposition duo grumbled. A senior Libya official Mohammed met in Paris provided the same gloomy forecast that now seemed unfortunately accurate, Mohammed said.

16. (C) The NSA commented that in Brussels, the Belgians were also pessimistic. The Belgian Director of Military Intelligence told Mohammed that Nigeria's reconciliation/power-sharing ideas would not work, in part, because the opposition and the Kinshasa government had both overestimated their strengths. Bemba and Onusumba boast they control 60 percent of the land between them while Kabila trumpets that 70 percent of the population live under his control. Each thinks he holds the trump card. While Kagame and Museveni continue to suborn Bemba and Onusumba, Dos Santos and Mugabe lend their support to Kinshasa. Mohammed postulated that too many of DROC's neighbors derived geo-political and economic benefit from the country remaining the sick man of central Africa. Some neighbors were wary of seeing a united DROC that might dwarf them. More troubling, Kabila's once encouraging pace towards reform and reconciliation had assumed a slower gait and might be in danger of changing direction altogether, Mohammed lamented.

17. (C) Mohammed confided that Nigeria had found the DROC peace process more multi-layered and complicated than expected. Unless the parties started to negotiate seriously, Nigeria might disengage altogether.

WADE'S TERRORISM CONFERENCE

18. (C) The NSA mentioned Obasanjo was in Dakar for President Wade's anti-terrorism conference. Mohammed characterized Wade's conference as a good idea undermined by poor implementation. Obasanjo went to Dakar to correct Wade's procedural gaffes. Explaining further, Mohammed stated that Wade erred by calling a Heads-of-State meeting first. The correct sequence should have been an experts' session, followed by a Ministerial, culminating in a Presidential summit. Second, Wade stumbled into a minor firestorm by inviting Morocco to a conference, which should have been convoked under the aegis of the Africa Union (AU). Morocco was not an AU member and those African states that support Polisario say they would likely boycott the Wade session because of the Moroccan invitation, Mohammed claimed.

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DOMESTIC UNREST - A TALE OF CITIES - JOS/KANO
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19. (C) Turning to matters closer to home, Mohammed stated that he had just met a group of concerned citizens from Jos. The group contended that the board of inquiry constituted to investigate the recent violence in Jos was ethnically-biased. After a long discussion, he believed the concerns of the delegation were assuaged and that these prominent citizens would now help, rather than hinder, the board's deliberation.

110. (C) Dismissing the violence in Kano as the work of street youth and quasi-gangs, Mohammed breathed a sigh of comparative relief, saying Kano was not nearly one-tenth as bad as Jos. He estimated that less than 100 people were killed in Kano, but admitted the GON estimate of 20 deaths was an understatement.

COMMENT

111. (C) NSA Mohammed appeared optimistic that Nigeria will be able to push the Sudanese process along. We hope so. However, he is quickly becoming disillusioned with the process in the DROC. Now that it has become time to talk in earnest about the substantive issues leading to peace, the Congolese parties seem to be steering towards their recalcitrant worst. We suspect that Mohammed may get a similar jolt from the Sudanese in the near future. Right now, progress may seem relatively easy as the Sudanese parties probably see Abuja as another opportunity to forum shop and while talks are basically focused on procedural matters. However, when the thorny substantial issues hit the table, Mohammed will likely find the Sudanese every bit as stubborn as the contenders in the Congo.
Jeter